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# DESIGN

OF A

## British Dictionary,

HISTORICAL and GEOGRAPHICAL;

With an ESSAY, Entituled,

### ARCHÆOLOGIA BRITANNICA:

AND A

### Natural History of WALES.

By EDWARD LHWYD, Keeper of the *Ashmolean Repository*, Oxon.

**B** EING invited by some Persons of Quality and Learning, to attempt something further in the *Antiquities*, and *Natural History* of *Wales*, than hath been yet performed; and also finding my self more Inclined, and (as I presume) better Qualified for an Employment of that kind, than for any other: I have here made bold to offer some Proposals towards such a Design, to the end that if the Works above mention'd may seem conducive to the Advancement of Learning, and worthy of the Favour and Encouragement of those amongst the Nobility and Gentry, whom it more immediately concerns, I may forthwith resolve on the Undertaking; or desist, in case they shall appear otherwise.

In the *Historical and Geographical Dictionary*, a brief Account is design'd:

I. Of all Persons memorable in the *British History*, whether mention'd by the *Romans*, or Writers of our own Nation: And of all such Authors as have written in *British*; whether *Welsh*, *Cornish*, or *Armorican*.

II. Of all Places in *Britain* mention'd by the *Greeks* and *Romans*; and of all Hundreds, Comots, Towns, Castles, Villages, and Seats of the Nobility and Gentry of chiefest Note now in *Wales*: As also of the most Notable Mountains, Rivers, Lakes; Barrows, Forts, Camps; and all such places as either retain any Monuments of Antiquity at present, or seem from their Names to have had such heretofore. Throughout this

whole Work, an Interpretation of all such proper Names, as are now intelligible, is intended; with Conjectures concerning some of those which are more obscure. And in this Part, 'tis presum'd, we may proceed with greater Security here, than might be expected in most other Countries. For, whereas in other Parts, the Names of Places have been so corrupted by Foreign Languages introduc'd by Conquest, that few of them are now intelligible to the best Critics; *Wales* has not been subject to such Changes, the Modern *British* being probably one surviving Dialect of the Language spoken by the first Inhabitants of this Island. The End I propose herein, is, the rectifying several Errors already committed in the Interpreting the Names of Places in this Kingdom; and the preventing of many more in *Wales* and *Scotland*; as also in some Places of *England*, where the *British* Names, either entire or corrupt, are still preserv'd. But we need not make any Apology for Etymological Observations, since *Bocharius*, *Mr. Camden*, *Boxhornius*, *Joannes Ger. Vossius*, *Agidius Menagius*, and many other Learned and Judicious Authors, have given the World such ample Testimonies of their Usefulness; provided they be cautiously handled, with due regard to the Corruption of Languages, and free from the Extravagancy of Fancy.

The Essay entituled, *Archæologia Britannica*, is design'd to be divided into Four Parts.

The First to contain, A Comparison of the Modern *Welsh* with other *European* Languages; more especially with the *Greek*, *Latin*, *Irish*, *Cornish*, and *Armorican*.

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The Second, A Comparison of the Customs and Traditions of the *Britans*, with those of other Nations.

The Third, An Account of all such Monuments now remaining in *Wales*, as are presum'd to be *British*; and either older, or not much later than the *Roman* Conquest: viz. their Camps and Burial-places; the Monuments called *Cromlech*, and *Meinewyr*; their Coyns, Arms, Amulets, &c.

The Fourth, An Account of the *Roman* Antiquities there, and some others of later Date; during the Government of the *British* Princes; together with Copies of all the Inscriptions of any considerable Antiquity, as yet remaining in that Country.

The *Natural History* may be divided into Five Sections.

The First whereof may contain, A General Description of the Country, in respect of its Situation, and Quality of the Soyl: An Account of Meteors; with Comparative Tables of the Weather in several places: Also of the Sea, Rivers, Lakes, Springs, and Mineral Waters.

§ 2. An Enumeration and Description of the various sorts of Earths, Stones, and all Mineral Bodies.

§ 3. Of Form'd Stones; or such as have a constant and regular Figure, whereby they are distinguishable from each others, no less than Plants or Animals.

§ 4. Of Plants: wherein we shall only take Notice of such as grow spontaneously in *Wales*, and have been rarely, or not at all, observ'd elsewhere in this Island: adding a Catalogue of such as are found in *England*, or *Scotland*, and have not been observ'd in *Wales*.

§ 5. Of Animals, in the same Method.

Thus I have given a Scheme of what seems to me at present, most likely to find Acceptance amongst the Learned and Ingenious: But this I offer with Submission to those of greater Judgment and Experience; and shall be very ready, in case I undertake the Performance, to admit of any Alteration or Amendment (agreeable with my Capacity) which they shall think fit to recommend.

Now in order to the Performance of what is here propos'd, 'twill be necessary to travel *Wales*, at least four or five Summers; and likewise to make one Journey into *Cornwall*, and another into *Ireland*, or the *Highlands* of *Scotland*, for parallel Observations, as to their Language, their Names of Towns, Rivers, Mountains, &c. it being certain, that the want of such actual Surveying, hath been in all Ages the occasion of much Error and Ignorance in Writings of this nature. During these Travels, I propose to my self the collecting Materials for each Work; but shall endeavour to prepare the *Dictionary* for the Press within the space of five Years; and the *Archæologia* within two Years after at farthest. As to the

*Natural History*, I can set no time for its Publication, as not being able to guess how tedious it may prove, and having some thoughts of writing it in *Latin*, and publishing it in several Sections apart.

But before we engage in a Work so very tedious and expensive, it seems necessary to understand, what Encouragement we are to depend upon; since nothing of this kind hath been undertaken (nor indeed could well succeed) in any Country, without such an assurance. It's well known, no kind of Writing requires more Expences and Fatigue, than that of *Natural History* and *Antiquities*: it being impossible to perform any thing accurately in those Studies, without much Travelling, and diligent Searching, as well the most desert Rocks and Mountains, as the more frequented Valleys and Plains. The Caves, Mines, and Quarries must be pry'd into, as well as the outward Surface of the Earth; nor must we have less regard to the Creatures of the Sea, Lakes, and Rivers, than those of the Air and Dry Land. But 'tis not the Expences of Travelling we are only to regard; the Charges of the Figures or Draughts of such new Discoveries as will occur, must needs be much more considerable: not to mention, that a Correspondence as extensive as we can settle it, must be maintain'd with the Curious in these Studies; and such new Books purchas'd, as are pertinent to our Design; and that Labourers (especially in Mines and Quarries) are to be rewarded for preserving such things, as they shall be directed to take Notice of.

Upon these Considerations, I hope it will not be thought profuse Liberality, (provided those who are competent Judges approve of the Design) if an Annual Pension be allow'd towards it, by such Gentlemen as are of their own free Choice inclin'd to promote it for the space of five Years: The Money to be deliver'd on the First of *March*, or any time that Month, into the Hands of some Friends in each County, who are pleas'd to take upon them the trouble of Returning it. And if this Proposal finds Acceptance, my Request is, That those Gentlemen who are pleas'd to further the Undertaking, would subscribe their Names to this Paper, adding how much they are dispos'd to contribute Yearly. And if what is subscrib'd, shall answer these Considerations, my design is (with God's permission) to begin Travelling next *March*. I am very sensible, that such an Encouragement is above my Merits; neither can I promise my Patrons a Performance (if it please God I may live to go thorough with it) any thing answerable to their Generosity: But whatever shall be the Success, I intend not to spare either Labour or Charges; and being engag'd in no Profession, nor (by the favour of the University) oblig'd to Personal Attendance in my present Station, nor at all confin'd with the Care of any Family, I shall have little else to mind, but to endeavour the Performance of this Task to my own Credit, and the Satisfaction of those Gentlemen who shall think fit to encourage me.

Oxon, Oct. 20. 1695.

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